

Mobility Transit big budget winner

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Staff Reporter

The 500 users of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Mobility Transit came out the big winners during Monday's budget talks. When local council struck its \$13.8 million budget, Mobility Transit was not overlooked. An appeal made by agency volunteers Wilfrid Morley and

Marg Britton paid off. Local council increased its grant allotment to Mobility Transit from \$11,000 to \$25,400. The service helps make sure disabled residents get vital door-to-door transportation service. Last year, Mobility Transit service logged more than 3,000 trips. It cost about \$50,000 a year to run the service. The other \$25,000 comes from fund

raising. Mobility Transit makes sure local residents in need get to doctor appointments, grocery and department stores, the library, schools and social visits. "We usually get \$11,000 from the town and \$14,000 from the province. But, the province has cut its funding so we asked the town to pick up the difference," said Morley.

Still no definite numbers: board

Local Catholic school supporters still have no clear answers on what the province's new education funding formula means to them. An overview of the system for trustees at Tuesday evening's district board meeting became a basic information session after certain technical documents failed to arrive until 5 p.m. that day, said board spokesperson Chris Cable yesterday. "There were no definite numbers presented," Cable said, although she added

trustees were told that "yes, we are optimistic, cautiously optimistic." The basic formula based on a board's students instead of its tax wealth was released a week ago, but grant formulas controlling other important areas like school construction, special education and transportation were not. The district board has formed several work teams to investigate these special areas over the next few weeks, Cable said. *Mike Adler*

Stouffville 'home to me' woman says

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Tribune was yet another reminder of the ongoing pain brought on by her brother. "I can't even feel comfortable going into a donut shop in Stouffville." During the spring of '97, Kevin used the name of the Stouffville Auto Clinic to make purchases worth about \$1,900 without permission of the owner, Iva's boyfriend Buchanan, also used Iva's business, Dependable Delivery Services to open a number of accounts with automobile parts dealers in Stouffville and Markham and made purchases in excess of \$5,000 without Iva's permission or knowledge. Police reported that Kevin also received a number of vehicles from different persons and said he'd sell them on consignment. He then sold the same vehicle to a number of different buyers by taking cash down payments from them, and telling them he would hold the vehicle until they had finished paying for it. In the early spring of '97, Kevin was released from jail having served time for fraud. He convinced Iva that he'd turned over a new leaf, wanted to rebuild his life and regain the trust of his family. "I believed him. He was well behaved, a real little prince. He was great with my two children," said Iva. Then after staying with Iva for about three months, Kevin started acting antsy. He up and left without discussion, said Iva. Soon after, people started coming to the door looking for either a vehicle or money — Iva knew she'd been taken again. She called the police. She then notified the family that Kevin was in trouble once again. "My parents want me to pack up the kids and join them to live in Prince Edward Island. But, Stouffville's home for me. I'll stay."



Stouffville Figure Skating Club donated half the proceeds from their recent skate-a-thon to the local chapter of the Heart & Stroke Foundation at the Stouffville Rec Complex. Photo by LORI EMMERSON

Board committed to JK: Crothers

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nary information from the province suggests the board will have "slightly more money to spend next year than last year." "That is, bearing in mind, it does present some challenges for the board," said Crothers. Superintendent of business Bruce Richardson indicated there will have to be some re-working of the board administration budget, as the province has indicated boards can only spend 3.4 per cent of their budgets on administration. The public board's spending on administration sits at about that figure now, while the separate board spends about 3.1 per cent. The transfers from the province appear less than the board's combined budgets from last year, but that is because certain items are no longer considered a direct cost to the board, such as tuition paid to other boards and unpaid taxes. Those two items accounted for almost \$20 million at the public board last year. And even though the province made a commitment to continue funding Junior Kindergarten, the separate board is concerned the program will suffer under a pupil/teacher ratio of 25 to 1. "The fact we already have JK means we won't incur the same start-up costs that boards who don't offer it would," Molinari said. "But even the minister's statement that the province will continue to support JK is erroneous, as the previous government was funding JK at a higher level." For the time being Molinari said, it will be business as usual for JK until the board has a firm understanding of how it will be funded. "I think this board has shown a real commitment to early childhood education. Even during the difficult years, we kept the program. We're ready to accept a new model and intend to continue with the same level of service," she said. Asked when public board supporters could expect to see JK reintroduced, board director Bill Hogarth said some programs will begin in September, but not all schools can offer JK immediately. "We do have a facilities issue. We don't want anyone around this board table thinking we can have everything up and running without some phasing in," Hogarth said. "But I'm thrilled we have this opportunity." Many schools will require renovations to accommodate JK, but Richardson noted previous requirements, such as washrooms in each JK class, may not exist.

CAS needs special people

York Region Children's Aid Society (YRCAS) is looking for special people for special children. Find out how you can make a positive difference in the lives of children between the ages of 9 and 14 years through sharing your parenting skills, your experience and your caring by becoming a foster parent. Anyone interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent is invited to attend an information evening. To confirm your attendance at the meeting call 731-3150 ext. 271.

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